

GREAT MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE  
MONTHLY NARRATIVE: JULY 1993

A. HIGHLIGHTS

B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Weather conditions in July were generally warm and dry. Temperatures hovered in the mid 90's for 8-10 days during the first two weeks of July. Two (2) inches of rain was recorded for the month, continuing a dry pattern which began in May. For the three months, May, June, and July less than 50% of normal rainfall has occurred, making this period the driest since 1982. The dry conditions are a virtual opposite of the winter and spring situations which brought record snow amounts and considerable spring flooding.

Sherman's bridge water elevations which were recorded at 119.87 on April 4, had dropped to 109.90 on July 7, a ten foot drop in 3 months! Water conditions along the floodplains of the Sudbury and Concord rivers are poor. Virtually no water is available to waterfowl or waterfowl broods except for river channels.

D. PLANNING

6. Other

A donation of \$100 toward purchase of the aquatic weed harvester was received by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation July 22. The refuge is working with NFWF and Volunteer Gerry Tolman on fund raising for this machine.

E. ADMINISTRATION

1. Personnel

Performance evaluations and plans were completed for all staff during July.

2. Meetings and Special Events

Refuge Manager Moses was on leave in Sweden from June 22 - July 7. 7/14 - RM Moses, RD Lambertson and AM Frickie met with Mass. DEM personnel, Mashpee selectmen, State Senator Raushenbach, s staffer, and Waquoit Bay Nat'l Estaurine Research Reserve Director Chris Gault concerning the 2,800 acre, Proposed refuge in Mashpee.

7/14 - Bill Zinni and RM Moses participated in the special meeting with the Lancaster board of selectmen from 7:30 - 10:15 P.M. which

resulted in the board taking a public vote to request Cong. Meehan to re-introduce the Atkins/Ashe legislation involving directing DOD to enter into a management agreement with the FWS for joint management of the South Post of Fort Devens. This meeting was attended by 75 members of the concerned public. Cong. Meehan's staffer, Mary Anne Preskul-Ricca was also present.

7/19 - RM Moses participated in a Fort Devens closure E.I.S. planning meeting with DOD staff, Corps of Engineers and their consultant who will be preparing the EIS, Mass. land bank staffer, Eric Knapp, and Joint boards of selectmen's staffer, Brett Doney at FT. Devens from 12:30 - 5:00 P.M.

7/22 - RM Moses met with Eino Ketola, owner and user of an illegal deer bow hunting tree stand involving baiting deer with a salt lick found by RM Moses last November on the newly acquired Dickey property. Mr. Ketola finally came forward to retrieve his seized property and was cited for the violation. The case was turned over to the state for prosecution.

7/22 - RM Moses attended Wild and Scenic River Committee meeting at the Framingham Library from 7:30- 10:15P.M.

7/29- RM Moses attended the John Hay Education Comm. meeting from 10:00-12:30 and the Governor's Commission for John Hay Refuge from 2:00 -5:30 P.M. at the refuge.

#### 4. Volunteer Program

The ongoing Volunteer projects continued in July. Four bluebird volunteers monitored nesting boxes. Diana Bronner performed the routine maintenance of the fish tank display. Barbara Howell took care of the Heard Pond Trail. At Oxbow, Bob Reed did his usual caretaking.

Natalie Eaton and Becky Fairbank responded, on short notice, to a request for help in mailing the Meadows Messenger.

Bob Reed and Bob Shaw teamed up to lead a summertime guided walk at the Concord Unit on July 25.

#### 6. Safety

CPR training has been scheduled for Aug. 27 at Great Meadows. Matt Poole, from Nashua NFH will be the instructor.

### F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

#### 2. Wetlands

Wetland habitat continued to suffer through the month of July due to lack of rainfall. Water elevations at the Concord impoundments dropped considerably this month exposing 5-6 feet of shoreline.

Water chestnut infestation is significant again this year and is manifest by the low water levels in the impoundments and along portions of the Sudbury river.

#### G. WILDLIFE

##### 2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

##### 3. Waterfowl

Waterfowl brood surveys which were completed in late June, and compiled in July indicate 1993 was a good production year. Wood ducks and mallards in particular were observed in good numbers.

##### 4. Marsh and Water Birds

Great blue herons were observed on a regular basis at both the Concord and Sudbury units. The small colony established on the Strand parcel successfully fledged its young by the end of July. Great egrets were observed at the Concord impoundments during the last few days of July. A Virginia rail brood and immature American bitterns were observed along the exposed shoreline of the Sudbury river this month. The low water levels forced normally secretive wildlife into the open, if only for a moment, where they could be observed by canoe.

##### 6. Raptors

Red tailed hawks were easily observed, especially after mowing operations, using refuge fields.

##### 7. Other Migratory Birds

##### 10. Other Resident Species

Bobwhite quail were observed and heard around the Strand property. These quail are possibly escaped from local dog training facilities.

Pileated woodpeckers were observed at the Strand property occasionally in July.

#### H. PUBLIC USE

##### 1. General

Five refuge leaflets were drafted and sent to the Graphic Section for production. The leaflets are general leaflets for Monomoy and Oxbow NWRs, self-guiding trail leaflets for Monomoy and John Hay NWRs, and a reprint of the Monomoy Bird List.

ORP Kennedy met with ORP Poole of Nashua NFH on July 19 to discuss public use and outreach programs.

## 2. Outdoor Classrooms - Students

Three youth groups, totalling 111 children visited the refuge as part of their organized activities. One group of 15 children and adults participated in a canoeing activity on the Concord River on July 20.

## 4. Interpretive Foot Trails

Volunteers Bob Reed and Bob Shaw lead a guided walk at the Concord Unit of July 25. A total of 45 people attended.

## 6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations

## 7. Other Interpretive Programs

Bio. Tech. Burke and ORP Kennedy provided guided walks for Elderhostel groups from Bentley College at the Concord Unit on July 19 and 26. There were about 55 adults in each group.

## 11. Wildlife Observation

## 17. Law Enforcement

ORP Kennedy provided firearms qualification for one Ninigret officer on July 8.

## 18. Cooperating Associations

Gross sales for July totalled \$300.20. Monomoy accounted for over 98% of the sales this month.

# I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

## 2. Rehabilitation

Work was completed on the handicapped access bridges over the spillways at the Concord impoundments in July. This work was begun in June. Stonedust was spread at the access ramps to provide a firm base for mobility impaired individuals.

Mowing was initiated around the dikes at Concord. Refuge fields at Water Row Rd. were mowed except for Rices field and the "alfalfa" field. The field at route 27 was mowed as were portions of the Strand parcel and much of the field at the shop/residence.

Portions of the Northeast gas pipeline R.O.W. were walked to determine if volume monitoring gauges were in place. Some of these devices contain mercury. None were found on the refuge.

Water control structure on the lower impoundment at Concord was cleaned out. A considerable amount of debris had accumulated in front of the structure as well as inside the riser, limiting its effectiveness.

A leaking pipe in the headquarters bldg. was discovered on the sixth of July. A shutdown of numerous valves and checks of various sections of the system did not provide a good clue as to the source of the leak. The staff began cutting small sections of drywall in the first floor ceiling where the majority of the water seemed to be accumulating. Eventually, a small pin hole leak was discovered in a 1/2 inch feeder tube to the second floor mens handicap restroom. The tube provided water to the water closet of the toilet. The tube was repaired on the 14th.

Work was initiated at the Oxbow NWR parking lot to install a canoe launch ramp. A large block of concrete was jackhammered and removed. A broken hydraulic hose on the dozer backhoe unit forced a three day shutdown while it was repaired. Work was completed in early August.

Boundary posting along the railroad bed at Oxbow was completed in July.

### 3. Major Maintenance

### 4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement